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# Marketing plan based on a networking strategy: a case study of J Gibbins putkimies

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## Marketing plan based on a networking strategy: a case study of J Gibbins putkimies

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**Marketing plan based on a networking strategy: a case study of J Gibbins putkimies**

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This study was commissioned by J Gibbins putkimies who is a sole proprietor, currently working in the plumbing and construction industry in the capital area of Finland. J Gibbins putkimies is a SME founded in 2012, is owned and run by a British plumber Jeffrey Gibbins. He specializes on all plumbing installations, maintenance, repairs and renovations for private and public companies in commercial and domestic properties.

This objective of the study is to establish an inexpensive marketing plan using networking as the strategy. J Gibbins putkimies operates in Helsinki at the moment, but is looking to move his operations in to Porvoo and its surrounding areas. The desired outcome is for J Gibbins putkimies to find a network of connections for a long term working relationship. The target market was other companies operating in the construction industry.

The research method used was qualitative research. The main data utilized was secondary data which was collected through desk study, supported by an interview conducted for Jeffrey Gibbins. The main research question concerns the means by which J Gibbins putkimies will be able to find new corporate and private customers effectively and with limited resources and the steps needed to be taken in order to succeed.

Networking was found as a cost-effective tool to be used and a networking strategy was introduced for J Gibbins putkimies. A marketing plan was constructed with the main aim to support the networking strategy. The main marketing tools to target the potential partners established were direct marketing, print advertisement and utilizing interest groups.

Keywords SME, construction industry, networking, marketing

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

This study was commissioned by J Gibbins putkimies who is a sole proprietor, currently working in the plumbing and construction industry in the capital area of Finland. J Gibbins putkimies, founded in 2012, is owned and run by a British plumber Jeffrey Gibbins. He specializes on all plumbing installations, maintenance, repairs and renovations for private and public companies in commercial and domestic properties.

Currently J Gibbins putkimies is operating in the capital area and solely freelancing for a Helsinki based plumbing company MW Putki. In the next year he is hoping to move his business to the Porvoo area. This change has brought about a need for this study. The aim of the study is to establish an inexpensive marketing plan which will mainly aid in networking with the local companies but also result in gaining a solid base of private customers. The desired outcome is for J Gibbins Putkimies to find a network of connections for a long term working relationship.

### 1.2 Objective and research question

The main objective for this thesis is to find out how can J Gibbins putkimies find customers, both business and private, effectively and with limited resources, mainly using networking as his tool. J Gibbins is moving from Helsinki to Porvoo and therefore is planning to focus doing business in Porvoo and its surrounding areas from now on. The thesis is researching the opportunities networking gives a small business when entering a new market. With effective research and analysis a networking strategy is provided to the client and based on the networking strategy a marketing plan is conducted as well. The marketing plan will have the answers to what J Gibbins putkimies should do in order to build a working and suitable network to serve his needs. The networking strategy is conducted through four steps stated later in the thesis and based on the information a marketing plan is done. The following research questions support the objective of the thesis:

1. How can a small business expand through networking?
2. What is the significance of networking?
3. What are the opportunities and challenges of networking?
4. What are the possibilities of a one man business?

### 1.3 Scope and limitations

This study focuses on finding effective and inexpensive ways for the case company to find new customers, build up a solid customer base with strong and lasting relationships. J Gibbins putkimies desires to use as small marketing budget as possible and focus on taking advantage of effective networking instead. The budget, the operating area and industry are taken into consideration in the scope of this study. The case company operates in the plumbing industry and the focus is to reach businesses in the construction industry, make cooperation with them and ultimately get private customers as well; through networking and word of mouth.

#### 1.4 Methods and data collection

The research method used is qualitative research. Secondary data will be utilized to investigate the means required when establishing networks in new surroundings in the construction field. In secondary data studies the research is conducted using already existing data which is relevant to the topic. (Sreejesh 2013, 18) Previous researches in the construction industry and on networking will be studied, as well as relevant online sources.

The data for J Gibbins putkimies has been collected via an interview with the owner Jeffrey Gibbins. The secondary data about construction companies, networks and Porvoo area has been collected by doing desk study and utilizing online sources, documents and statistics.

#### 1.5 Case Company J Gibbins Putkimies

J Gibbins putkimies operates in the construction industry mainly doing plumbing work. The company was established in 2012 by the owner Jeffrey Gibbins who moved to Finland from the UK. He is a fully qualified plumber and has over ten years of work experience in the plumbing sector in the UK as well as in Australia. (Gibbins, interview 2 February 2015)

##### 1.5.1 History and Philosophy

Since 2012 J Gibbins has mainly worked for MV-putki; a Helsinki based plumbing company. He started by using MV-putki's tools and transportation but has slowly built up a comprehensive set of tools and in the start of the year 2015 he purchased his own van. Now he has become completely independent of MV-putki and is looking to move his business to Porvoo where he lives. He recently began a co-operation with a luxury brand Pro patio, who sell Jacuzzis. His job will be the installing of the Jacuzzis to Pro patio's customers' homes.

J Gibbins does all plumbing works including; maintenance, installments, repairs, plumbing renovations for domestic and commercial properties. He works from Monday to Friday from 7-16 but is able to provide flexibility.

J Gibbins putkimies' philosophy is based on efficient, yet accurate work while concentrating on the customer needs. He aims to provide the customers with flexibility, convenience and satisfaction. He takes pride in ensuring good customer service and a perfect finish. (Gibbins, interview 2 February 2015)

### 1.5.2 Pricing

J Gibbins putkimies has a set hourly rate of 40 euros + VAT for private customers. He charges 31 euros+ VAT per hour for MV - putki, the plumbing company he freelances to. MV Putki organizes and gets all J Gibbins's work and for that reason the price is lower compared to other prices. J Gibbins prices his services for other cooperatives at 36 euros + VAT per hour. The hourly rate consists of the cost of labor. In addition the customer has to pay for material costs unless stated otherwise. Furthermore J Gibbins putkimies price larger single jobs with price-work pay. In these cases he makes an offer of the accumulation of labor and material costs.

J Gibbins putkimies offers payments to be carried out via invoices. In case of jobs charged with hourly rate the invoice will be handed after the job is completed. J Gibbins has set a limit of 2000 euros that can accumulate before the customer is invoiced. Only after the invoice has been paid will he carry on with the work. Furthermore the customer pays for the required materials themselves. The customer can either choose to get the material themselves or J Gibbins can buy the materials and invoice for them. Getting the materials via J Gibbins putkimies is normally cheaper since he is able to receive a discount from various plumbing/construction shops.

On jobs charged by piecework pay the process starts by J Gibbins Putkimies making an offer which lists the labor and material costs and has a payment plan in it. If the customer accepts the offer they also commit to the payment plan. The payment plan consists of three to five payments, dependent on the size of the job. The first instalment always consists of majority of the material costs. The figure below shows an example of a job priced at 8350 euros.

Discounts J Gibbins putkimies offers to partnerships or long relationships according to the work completed. The discount is not a set percentage of the entire cost rather a small agreed reduction of the price. (Gibbins, interview 2 February 2015)



### 1.5.3 Current marketing

At the moment J Gibbins putkimies has none of its own advertisements. Regardless he has built a chain of connections in the Helsinki area within the three years of working there. With good work ethic and people skills J Gibbins putkimies has aimed to promote word of mouth. He is planning on being apparent online, getting business cards and printing an advertisement on the van. (Gibbins, interview 2 February 2015)

## 1.6 Plumbing industry in Finland

The plumbing industry in Finland employs over 25 000 people. It encounters for 18 % of the construction industry. The job descriptions vary from planners, project managers to retailers, technicians and plumbers. Plumbers normally either work for themselves or in larger corporations doing plumbing contracts in either new builds or repair renovation sites.

Plumbers either work in teams, alongside other contractors or alone dependent on the scale of the job. Recently installing of larger industrial ensembles has been dominant but also works for domestic households and other industrial buildings remains constant.

The plumbing industry in Finland has been renowned to provide lots of work for professionals and it will continue to do that. The industry is a necessity in the building sector. New constructions are continuously taking place especially in the center of growth. Domestic and industrial constructions are being built, as well as, old buildings being renovated for new purposes. Furthermore an increasing amount of Finnish constructions are at the age that plumbing renovations and other larger basic renovations are required and will continue to increase at least until 2030.

Since majority of the work done in the plumbing industry cannot be taken abroad there will always be adequate amount of work to offer. Furthermore the middle age of the industry is remarkably high which will conclude in a lot of the work force retiring in the coming years leaving more jobs for others. (Lvi-ala 2015)

## 1.7 Porvoo as the marketing area

Porvoo is the second oldest town in Finland founded already in the 13<sup>th</sup> century located in southern Finland only 50 kilometers from the capital Helsinki. It is renowned for its old town, historical stories, being the center of energy and environmental businesses and for its bilingual residents speaking both Swedish and Finnish. Porvoo consists of 655 square meters and

has approximately 50 000 residents. The town has over 20 000 jobs and just under 3500 businesses.

From a plumbing company perspective Porvoo can offer many jobs. Due to its old age many buildings require renovating. In addition Porvoo is growing continuously. It is the center of energy and environmental technology companies and electric building services and it is seeking to become the most energy efficient town in Finland. Porvoo is the center of commercial services in the Itä-Uusimaa district. Furthermore new areas are being developed continuously. (Porvoo 2015)

## 2 SME, networking and marketing

### 2.1 SME

A SME stands for small and medium sized enterprises. According to EU law SME's are categorized by the size of the enterprise regarding the amount of employees and the turnover or balance sheet total. A SME can have a maximum of 250 employees and the turnover cannot be over EUR 50 million and/or the balance sheet total can to be above EUR 43 million.

Within a SME there are three categories; medium-sized companies, small and micro. The following figure will indicate the categorization within the three. (European Commission 2015)

<b>Company category</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>Turnover</b>	or	<b>Balance sheet total</b>
Medium-sized	< 250	≤ € 50 m		≤ € 43 m
Small	< 50	≤ € 10 m		≤ € 10 m
Micro	< 10	≤ € 2 m		≤ € 2 m

Figure 1: SME categorization

The SME definition was adopted in 2005 by the European Union and in 2006 the first report for implementation was formed. This more accurate definition was agreed on in 2003 in order to take into account the developments in the economy. Before, majority of European enterprises could be defined as SMEs but the new more accurate definition also considered connection between other companies. These connections could provide significant financial benefits that could generate such profits that they would not belong in the SME category anymore. (European Commission 2006, 10-12)

The main aim for the new SME definition adopted was to ensure that the possible benefits that the SMEs are entitled to would be offered only to the companies that need them. This is why the amount of employees, turnover and balance sheet total started to be the key measure of the company size. (European Commission 2006, 10-12)

According to the EU implementation document in 2009 for SME definition there was 23 million enterprises in the SME category which offer 75 million jobs. They counter for 99 % of all enterprises. SME's are at the center of the European economy since they are a significant source of entrepreneurship, innovation and employment. (Commission staff working document 2009)

In Finland 98,8 % of companies are SME. Micro sized companies count for 93,4 % of all enterprises, small companies for 5,5 and medium sized for 0,9. (Yrittäjyys Suomessa 2015 (2013)) They employ around 100 000 people and 55 % of the turnover generated by companies in Finland come from the SME sector. Micro sized companies count for 93,4 % of all enterprises, small companies for 5,5 and medium sized for 0,9. (Yrittäjyys Suomessa 2015)

## 2.2 Networking

Networking, which by other name is called business collaboration, is one of the most important factors that influences in the success of small and medium sized companies. Small and medium sized companies are eager to network in order to maximize efficiency, flexibility and specialization. In addition they want to split expenses and risks and learn from others and gain credibility. Flexibility and ability to react fast in changing situations are needed in order to grow and adapt into the change of order backlogs.

Smaller businesses form collaborations so that they can compete with bigger companies. Small and medium sized businesses are forced to search for competitive advantage through networking, since they have small and limited resources for production, marketing, product development and internationalization.

On the other hand networking offers small and medium sized companies a possibility to work in collaboration with bigger companies as more and more suppliers buy bigger quantities and wholes from one provider. (Varamäki 2006, 173.)

### 2.2.1 4 Steps of networking

Networking is an effective way of getting new sales leads and to deepen relationships with existing contacts, which will evidently then lead to increase in business. Through networking

a business can learn useful information about their markets resulting in them being able to provide more relevant services.

More than 80% of business comes typically from word-of-mouth recommendations, direct networking and referrals. Networking is an excellent source of business for companies who do not have a large marketing budget; however a good networking strategy is still needed in order to gain from networking. Networking is one of the most cost-effective ways to enter a market. When networking is done well it can generate up to 90% of new business. There are several useful steps how to develop a good networking strategy.

Firstly a business must identify their reasons to network and have a clear vision on why they want to network. Reasons might be to find new business, contacts or introducers to retain and build existing relationships. It might be for career development, for instance in finding another job within the company or another. Another reason might be to position their self as an expert within their market or to strengthen relationships with colleagues and employees. When considering reasons to network, it is important to establish how much time and effort of your networking should be dedicated to different goals. A business should think how much networking should focus on finding new contacts and how much should be spent strengthening relationships with existing customers. The goals of networking should be placed in order of importance and thought how urgent each one of them is.

Secondly a business must find out approximately how many contacts they need or want. Every people met, should be considered as a possible contact, they might be people you have done business with or friends. An estimation of the number of contacts needed to achieve the aimed networking goals should be done.

Thirdly a business must identify the people they should network with. Right contacts are crucial. Ideal for a small-business owner is to have a network of 60-100 people in order to achieve their networking goals. There are many ways in identifying who could be the best contacts for you. You might know already names of people who you wish to have better relationships with. Arranging meetings with this kind of people is a good way in getting to know them better. Whom of the contacts you already have would make the best introducers for you and introduce you to their contacts. A company should also think of what types of businesses they want to meet and even have specific companies on their mind. Membership organizations are also a good path in building up a network.

Finally after having thought all the above mentioned, the business is ready to review and take action of their networking strategy. When reviewing the networking plan the business should think of following aspects; the reasons why they want to network and are they still valid, the

most important areas and will the targets be reached quickly, is there a good division between developing relationships with existing contacts and finding new ones. A deadline for achieving the planned networking goals should be set. (Create an effective networking strategy, 2015)

### 2.2.2 Challenges of networking

Researches show that networking of small and medium sized businesses is not as easy even though there are good arguments on the matter. The empirical study results of networking are contradictory. It is estimated that over half of businesses collaboration attempts would have failed. Causal relations that support the survival of businesses, growth of profitability and business through collaboration have been found, however so have causal relations to cancel them.

Failures have been due to for instance bad management of collaboration, weak commitment and the lack of knowledge of the operators. The majority of researches that have been conducted focus on the beginning stages of business collaboration and the actual implementation stage has been left on less attention. It is assumed that the progression of cooperation ends when the contract has been signed by all parties. This is peculiar, since according to the empirical studies the real touchstones appear only at the implementation stage. (Varamäki 2006, 174-175.)

A challenge for partnership is that it contains both elements; cooperation and competition. The status of a company in the network influences its role and ability to earn, even though a win win-situation is pursued for in a network. The more specialized know-how the business has the more significant their role in the network is and by that they can demand a bigger share of the networks production. A significant role can rest on a very narrow and hardly replaceable special knowledge. (Valkokari 2008, 82-83.)

### 2.2.3 Networks as a strategy

Networks have significant strategic influences. Through networking a company can focus on more crucial operations according to their own competitiveness. Other operations come efficiently through cooperation businesses, since they are correspondingly the core competence of these businesses. The willingness of a company to network is in their resource needs. Through collaboration is gained value bringing capital that cannot be built or purchased from the market. The more appealing the company is the better chances it has in signing collaboration agreements. With appealing is meant that kind of resources and know-how that cannot

be gotten from the market. Small businesses can be divided into categories according to resources and strategic behaviour. (Toivola 2006, 71.)

Networking is possibility for small businesses to increase resources and gain new strategic opportunities. Some small businesses may have new innovative ideas and the willingness to grow but also too limited resources. Networking gives these companies an opportunity to get to international markets. Through cooperation even a freelancer can become the best operator of their own core competence and an entrepreneur-like business. (Toivola 2006, 72.)

Networking enables the growth of a business and expands the flexibility of growing companies. Companies that grow fast use on average more external resources. Networking gives these growing businesses an opportunity for fast growth. Companies with good networking connections are also able to renew their products in a faster pace. (Toivola 2006, 73.)

Strong mutual commitment is a vital element in the success of networking. Trust between parties is crucial in understanding companionship. Especially for the growth and innovation of small businesses, networking and building cooperation has great significance. Good management of cooperation is something that should be invested in. The ability of a growing business to lead, recognize and develop cooperation is vital for their success and survival. (Toivola 2006, 74.)

The usage of collaborative partners can also be seen as an innovative strategy if a company has innovative ideas but no resources or experience to get their product to the market. Selecting partners should be done keeping eye on their growth strategy and gaining complementary skills. The purpose of collaboration is to give businesses the possibility to invest in their own core competence and in the other hand provide complementary know-how. Networking is supposed to be more of an opportunity than a force to reach needed resources.

Long-term and productive networking relations have been gained through active and open communication and by creating a shared product. (Toivola 2006, 74.)

Strategic business networks offer a lot of opportunities. In order for networking to be successful it requires a view of networks demands, nature and opportunities. The right networking strategy and long-term cooperation work is expected from the management. (Valkokari 2008, 82.)

#### 2.2.4 Networking processes

Networking can be a beneficial way to establish a solid customer base. In order to gain the best advantages certain strategic measures have to be taken into account. Firstly a target

market needs to be established in order to ensure effective marketing. A target market can consist of one or two niche markets. Associations or civic groups that the target markets are involved with should be participated in and become key members that people remember. (Attard 2015)

Potential partners who to cooperate with have to be looked for. Building relationships with other professionals from the same industry that serve the same customers but are not direct competition is necessary. Also speeches can be given or articles written locally about area of expertise skills and knowledge. Furthermore contacting relevant media sources and attending industry specific trade shows. (Attard 2015)

Gaining knowledge on what customers or potential partners really need has to be considered so the needs can be met. Additionally old contacts or any previous acquaintances that could be useful for the business should be reached out to. Moreover it is vital to follow up on any previous leads regardless on relevance and ask for business or partnerships. (Attard 2015)

## 2.3 Marketing as a process

### 2.3.1 Definition of marketing

The modern definition for marketing is “marketing is the activity, set of instructions, and processes for creating communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (AMA, 2013). Marketing is based on thinking about the business in terms of customer needs and their satisfaction. According to Kotler one of the shortest definitions of marketing can be said to be the process of meeting needs profitably. This kind of approach can be called balanced centricity which is a focus on the customer but also on the company and its objectives.

Marketing plays a significant role in every company’s success in the competitive business world today and in order to grow and understand their customers businesses must use marketing. Good marketing can be the key to financial success of a company. Good marketing is about understanding customer needs and if that is not done correctly no other business functions matter. It is about recognizing sufficient demand for products and services in order to make a profit. Marketing is considered one of the revenue-generating functions of a business. Marketing has succeeded if the profit levels are high enough that the business can prosper in the long run.

Marketing is not only about the advertisements consumers see. In fact 80 to 90 per cent of marketing occurs out of the sight of the customer. Advertising, sales and so on are the final rather than the beginning stages of marketing. (Kotler et al 2006, 3-8)

### 2.3.2 Creating a marketing plan

Marketing plan is conducted in order to have a clear vision on the selected marketing goals that are aimed to be accomplished. Marketing plan contains structured information and suggestions with detailed information of chosen channels and tools that are to be used to reach the target market and wished outcome. The plan analyses both the company's internal and external environments, with the usage of macro environment and SWOT analyses. (Wood 2003, 3-4; Puustinen & Rouhiainen 2007, 28 - 29.)

When creating a marketing plan a good tool to be implemented is the six-step SOSTAC model. SOSTAC model includes situation analysis, objectives, strategy, tactics, action and control. The questions of the model guide the marketing plan maker on finding the answers for: where are we now, where do we want to go, and how do we get there. After these the fourth step consists of the detailed strategy of marketing actions. The last two steps have their focus on implementing the chosen actions and monitoring their results. Marketing planning is the process of writing a marketing plan, which includes researching and analyzing the markets and marketing tools. The planner must carefully evaluate the market situation and target markets to find the correct marketing tools and marketing channels to reach the marketing objectives of the company. (Wood 2003, 3)





Figure 2: SOSTAC model

The objective of the marketing plan is to guide the company in its decision making process. The marketing related factors to be taken into consideration could be for instance selection of a marketing strategy, target groups and services, marketing implementation, cooperation partners, marketing communications tools and the budget. (Puustinen & Rouhiainen 2007, 28.) The purpose of a marketing plan is to describe detailed short-term implementations on how to increase the income of the company in the long-run. (Wood 2003, 4.)

In terms of risk evaluation it is vital to have the marketing plan in written form. Through this the company's decision makers can assess whether the marketing actions planned are worth the investment. A well prepared marketing plan should include a calculated budget, risk assessment and cost estimations. Thorough planning is crucial in order to minimize the usage of time and money on unprofitable actions as well as eliminate risk factors in an early stage. (Masterman & Wood 2006, 6.)

### 2.3.3 Marketing mix

The way marketing is done has changed drastically. The traditional view to marketing was focused on the product. The aim of the marketing was to complete a transaction rather than concentrating in customer relationship. The 'new' way to view marketing is that the focus is on the consumer. The marketing is customer oriented. The end user is at the center and the marketing communication is altered to satisfy the customer and meet their needs. (Faarup 2010, 172)

The concept of marketing mix is one of the most renowned marketing concepts amongst professionals. It was initially introduced by James Culliton in 1948. He had the idea that the marketing manager was a mixer of different ingredients which consisted of all the marketing variables. The ingredients would then form a unique marketing recipe to fit the customer needs and wants at a given time. (Jain 2009, 76)

#### **4Ps**

The concept was further developed by McCarthy who thought that marketing mix was a set of activities which created and communicated value to consumers. McCarthy categorized the marketing mix into four board sets; product, price, place and promotion. These are referred to as the 4Ps of marketing. A marketing manager has to ensure that these four separate key areas are accordingly managed in order to meet the target customer's needs better than the competition.

The product refers to any tangible or intangible objects so all products and services the company sells. Furthermore the product category involves everything related to the product meaning branding, packaging, quality, design, size, features, services, warranties, returns and planning.

The price refers to the amount the customer pays for the product or service and factors relating to it. The factors consist of credit terms, payment periods, allowances and possible discounts.

The place category is the location where the product or service can be purchased; the distribution channels. It also involves the selection, transportation and coverage of the product or service. The place can be either physical such as a store or visual such as internet, or both. The promotion refers to all the communication channels of the product or service that the marketer chooses to reach the customers. The communication can be direct or indirect involving advertising, public relations, sales promotion and selling.

All the 4Ps have to correctly be managed in order to ensure effective marketing. The product has to be suitable from every aspect in order to meet the needs of the target segment. The price has to match the customer's willingness to pay and the place has to be accessible for the target segment. Finally the promotion has to reach and attract the wanted consumers. (Kotler et al 2009, 19) (Jain 2009, 77)



Figure 3: 4Ps of marketing

#### 2.3.4 SWOT

A SWOT analysis is a key tool for marketers to examine their organization and the environment they operate in. It is the first step when planning marketing communication, aiding in highlighting important factors.

The analysis consists of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The categories can be divided into internal and external SWOT factors and furthermore to positive and negative factors. Strengths and weaknesses are internal SWOT factors that are managed within the company. Strengths are positive and weaknesses are negative. Opportunities and threats are external SWOT factors which are influenced by the business environment. Opportunities are positive and threats are negative.

Strengths are company's strong points which assist in bringing value to the customer. They are assets which give the company competitive advantages over others. Weaknesses on the

other hand are flaws that the company has. They are limitations in their capabilities. Opportunities are possible prospects that the market place poses for future growth. Threats are factors that can negatively influence a company's position in the market place.



Figure 4: SWOT analysis

The analysis is normally formed with the help of a graph. The factors influencing every aspect of the business are listed and divided into appropriate categories. The end result will aid the marketer to see where the company stands in the market. The aim is to turn weaknesses into strengths and threats into opportunities and eventually to create additional value for the consumers.

In order to ensure a successful SWOT analysis a marketer has to ensure that they remain realistic, that they are specific and that the analysis is straight to the point. SWOT should be clear of where the company is now and where it wants to be also in relation to the competition. Furthermore a SWOT analysis is always subjective. (Friesner, 2014)

#### 2.3.5 Choosing marketing means

When choosing marketing means it is important to choose the right mediums that are suitable for the company's target market. There are various marketing means, however the main categories are media marketing and direct marketing. Media marketing includes advertisements in newspapers and other printed media, television-, movie- and radio advertisements, out-

doors- and traffic advertisements and online advertisements. Direct marketing is directed straight to consumers for instance via mail. It is common for companies to typically choose one or two main marketing mediums, which they then re-enforce with other marketing means according to selected market segment and situation. (Bergström 2004, 281)

Before making the decision on what mediums to use there are several questions to be considered such as: what is your target market, what media does your target market watch, listen to or read and what are the company's advertising objectives and how well does this medium help to accomplish them.

When the goal of the campaign, target market and message is clear the company will decide on which marketing media they will use. Making intermedia decisions is when the company chooses the type of media they will use and intra-media decisions when choosing on a specific newspaper or television channel. (Prime 2013)

#### 2.3.6 B2B marketing tools

B2b marketing is promoting products and services to other businesses rather than consumers. B2B markets are normally lot more complex than consumer markets even though there can only be a few customers. The relationship is though a lot longer lasting and closer and sale quantities are bigger. (Kotler 2006, 21)

The marketing tools in B2B markets consist of the same than in consumer markets; personal selling, directs selling, public relations, trade shows and exhibitions, advertisement and sales promotion. Personal selling is normally though highlighted and mainly focused on. The other means should not be disregarded though but rather seen as potential tools to assist in building brand equity. (Kotler 2006, 110)

As said personal selling is the key tool in B2B marketing. Personal selling refers to the face-to-face interaction between buyer and seller with the aim of gaining an order. Since there are only few customers the selling process is carefully tailored to meet the needs of the customer while building a long lasting close personal relationship. In personal selling everything affects the way the company is perceived, such as the sales person's appearance and knowledge base. (Kotler 2006, 111)

In personal selling it is effective to utilize direct marketing tools including; direct mail, tele-marketing, e-mail, newsletter, catalog, internet and other means that directly reaches the exact prospect. These tools offer a variety of ways to customize the marketing communication to meet the individual needs of the customers. This also aids in eliminating unnecessary

marketing communications to customers who do not require them. Direct marketing tools are beneficial when aiming for continuous customer relationships since they allow the marketer to personalize the communication cost-effectively. (Kotler 2006, 112)

Public relations refer to the act of creating exposure in the media that reaches a larger audience. The benefits of promoting PR are that they can bring brand credibility and reach customers who ignore sales people and advertisements. (Kotler 2006, 113) Trade shows and exhibitions are a popular tool in the B2B markets. They bring buyers and sellers together in one place and aid in promoting brand awareness and finding key contacts. (Kotler 2006, 114)

Advertising tools are traditionally created to grab the audience's attention on an emotional level for example through print advertisement or commercials (Kotler 2006, 118). Sales promotion on the other hand is a marketing tool where the consumer is tempted with the assistance of an incentive such as a discount for a certain period of time. The aim is to encourage customers to try the product or service (Kotler 2006, 122)

### 3 Case company: Networking and marketing plan

#### 3.1 Networking process (4 Steps)

Networking is chosen as the most efficient and effective tool for J Gibbins to expand his circle of contacts and through that reach new customers and evidently make more profit. In order to expand and make more profit, the ability to network is one of the most crucial skills an entrepreneur can have. (Networking) The main reason for networking is to find new contacts and build a steady and creditable network of business partners. J Gibbins wishes to sign a collaboration with one some of the biggest operators in Porvoo area. In the beginning the focus is going to be on finding new customers rather than strengthening relationships with existing, since J Gibbins is starting to operate in Porvoo, which is a new area for him.

To gain new contacts J Gibbins is to join different trade unions and take part in their events, in order to network with people from the same industry - and why not others as well. Being visible and being part of different organizations is becoming more important today, since recommendations play a vital role in gaining new customers. Other word for this might be word of mouth, which J Gibbins is aiming for, due to his limited resources when it comes to marketing. According to Juusela everything works more and more through networking these days and managers talk to each other in hopes of opinions on employees. The more visible someone is, the better job offers are received. (Työpiste 2015)

Finnish Association of HPAC Technical Contractors is one to consider. They focus on business and industrial affairs and labor markets and their member companies are experts in HPAC construction and installation services. The association has over 300 members and they continually work to develop the HPAC industry and their members' abilities to prosper. (LVI-Tekniset urakoitsijat 2015) By joining and taking part in events J Gibbins could meet creditable and suitable partners to work with. J Gibbins would have his company name in the member catalogue which is found from the associations' website.

Porvoon yrittäjät ry is an interest group for small and medium sized companies operating in Porvoo area. The associations idea as a specialist and influencer is to improve businesses and entrepreneurs general conditions in the associations area of operation and strive to active dialogue with the city's' management. Porvoon yrittäjät ry has over 850 members from all industry fields. (Porvoon yrittäjät ry 2015) Porvoon yrittäjät provides support and benefits for its members. A 12 month membership for a one person company is 145 euros and it is deductible in the company's taxation. As a member of Porvoon yrittäjät the member also becomes automatically a member of Suomen Yrittäjät and Uudenmaan Yrittäjät. The members receive benefits such as educational services, a free phone consultation in business operation related questions and insurance-, electricity- and gas discounts. (Porvoon yrittäjät ry 2015)

Suomen LVI-liitto, SuLVI ry is a collaboration- and education organization for people working in the LVI-industry. SuLVI maintains and develops its members professional know-how by organizing courses, educational events and bulletins. SuLVI has 31 member organizations and all together almost 5000 members. The members consist of for instance designers, contractors, supervisors, sales- and marketing people, entrepreneurs and importers. Members have benefits such as discounts in educational events and literature, magazines and travels. (Suomen LVI-liitto 2015)

The goal is to grow J Gibbins' network as much as possible and build good relationships with every person he meets. There is no number set on how many contacts he should have, however as much as it is needed in order for it being possible for him to work full time. J Gibbins works from Monday till Friday from 7-17 and he operates alone. As stated earlier on, ideal for a small business is to have a network of 60-100 people in order to achieve its networking goals. However in this particular industry even one strong contact might be enough if it is able to provide for instance project based work, continuing through a certain period of time.

J Gibbins wishes doing collaboration with some of the biggest construction and/or plumbing businesses operating in Porvoo area. The most important factor when choosing businesses to work with is that they must have a good reputation and be considered trustworthy in consumers eyes.

Plumbers tend to have a bad reputation and there are certain stereotypes of them. Talouselämä wrote an article listing the most common negative thoughts that consumers have on operators from this industry. Most typically heard and also mentioned in this article were that they do not clean after themselves, the end bills are always a lot bigger than talked and that they do not reply their calls. (Talouselämä 2015) J Gibbins wants to turn this thinking around with his excellent customer service and manners. He wishes to always leave the job with a satisfied customer.

Working in collaboration with a well-known and big company with a good reputation is something J Gibbins wishes to end up with. The chosen companies that J Gibbins is to approach in collaboration means are;

Consti Group is Finland's leading construction company who specializes in renovations. Consti offers repair contracting, pipeline renovation, building facade renovation, technical building services, and landscaping. Consti aims to bring value-adding change to housing companies, commercial office buildings, hotels, industrial plants, restaurants and public-sector sites. Consti operates also in Porvoo area and this is a company that would suit J Gibbins' wishes. Consti offers pipeline renovations, which would provide longer period projects for J Gibbins. (Consti 2015)

Uudenmaan LVI-asennus is a smaller company who has their focus on smaller scale jobs compared to Consti and Mikenti that are mentioned above. Uudenmaan LVI-asennus is a trustworthy partner in smaller maintenance and repair jobs as well as in challenging projects. Their idea is to make clear from the start to the customer on how broad the project is and based on that they provide a plan, schedule and price. (Uudenmaan LVI-asennus 2015)

Putkityö P. Lampi does small plumbing installation LVI-jobs for private housing and process industry in Itä-Uusimaa. P. Lampi's base is in Porvoo, but they also operate in Sipoo, Loviisa, Pernaja, Askola and Pornainen. The company is specialized in plumbing repairs. The company says to be quick, professional and trustworthy. In addition to plumbing jobs, P. Lampi Oy does heating- and ventilation jobs. (Putkityö P. Lampi Oy 2015)

LVI-center Auhtola is a company focusing on retail of spare parts. In addition they do all LVI related maintenance and repair jobs in all kinds of buildings and selling and installation of district heating matters. LVI-center Auhtola employs 15 LVI-industry experts. They offer competitive and high standard solutions, big and small projects for both private and public sector. They operate in new construction and maintenance and repair. (LVI-Center Auhtola 2015)



With all these companies J Gibbins could get an edge in his field and educate himself even further to always be up to date with his services.

### 3.2 Benefits of networking

There are at least fifty operators in the plumbing field that can be found from company search in Porvoo area. (LVI-alan työt Porvo 2015) This may be seen as a benefit or a challenge. The benefit is that J Gibbins will have a lot of possible businesses to make cooperation with, without losing his independence. Through doing cooperation with big businesses small one-man businesses can survive.

Every business has their own circle of contacts and customers and through this it is possible to expand their own network of contacts as well. Sharing work projects is not the only way to execute cooperation. Businesses can also share possible expenses. For instance expensive equipment can be purchased together and expenses can be split if businesses are working tightly together. At least that kind of equipment that are not in use every day. Big businesses have the upper hand in this situation, since they don't have a problem investing in equipment. Due to lack of equipment a small business may lose customers finding themselves in a situation they are unable to provide certain services.

Another benefit in networking is that it may be utilized also during the holiday season. Small businesses rarely have the chance to have holidays. Through networking this could be made possible, since partners could fill in each other. This would mean that the business partner must be liable so that the others reputation will not suffer because of the other.

### 3.3 Challenges of networking

There are challenges in collaboration among businesses. First of all networking with another entrepreneur needs strong reliability however correspondingly an eye for discretion. Businesses work as independent operators and are each other's competitors, even though they would be in collaboration with each other. An entrepreneur still wants to keep their own customers and knowhow. An unreliable business partner might try to snip customers to their selves or act in some other way against good ethics. There is also the danger that something might be revealed to the partner that should not be, however it is up to the partner whether they take advantage of that.

The same trust issue arises when talking about making equipment purchases together. Can all parties use the equipment appropriately and will they take responsibility if something happens. This is why, if conflicts arise, it is crucial to set rules and boundaries when starting to make cooperation with a company.

Problems might occur too on how the earnings of a done job are shared. The hours spent on the job may not divide evenly among all parties and all work cannot be measured in money. As a conclusion to this there might be a contract signed on that. For instance the one who has fixed the job receives 10% more than others. Through this kind of arrangement the ones fixing the jobs get an earned compensation of it.

The biggest issue for networking remains the management of it. Somebody has to manage the collaboration, otherwise it will not work. It has been stated that bad management or the lack of it is the main reason for networking failure. Businesses working together must think what kind of management strategy would suit them best and who is given the charge. The situation is not made easy, since small business owners are very busy on their schedules. A successful cooperation takes commitment and good communication.

### 3.4 Marketing communication

The marketing plan has been prepared to support the networking strategy. The emphasis will be on getting long term collaborations with the local businesses for plumbing renovations, new buildings, installations, maintenance and repairs. Private customers are to an extent disregarded in the plan since they are rarely able to provide long term relationships. Furthermore it is believed that by cooperating with large companies will raise general awareness which will aid in reaching the private customers.

With the information in hand a marketing communication plan will be introduced in order for J Gibbing putkimies to succeed in establishing itself in new surroundings and gaining a solid network of customers. J Gibbins putkimies' starting point is from very basic point of business; he has a wide set of tools and transportation but no marketing communications tools. His marketing objective is to network with companies who can provide him with reliability, work and long term relationship.

### 3.5 Marketing mix

In order to market efficiently the 4Ps of marketing have to be adequately balanced and managed.

The product in this case is the plumbing services offered by J Gibbins putkimies. He is able to complete all necessary plumbing works from maintenance to plumbing renovations. As J Gibbins and his actions is the product he has to ensure perfect delivery at all times. Good customer service skills are continuously neglected in the construction industry. The thought process is traditionally more manufacture centric engineer thinking even though it should switch to being customer centered according to Matti Harjuniemi, the chairman of the Finnish construction union. (Iltalehti 2014) The customer has to be at the center of the product, or service in this case, and the service has to be modified and completed to the customer's needs to perfection.

J Gibbins has set up his own pricing method which has been discussed earlier. Average plumber costs in the capital area around 49 € including VAT. The price is only for the service; transportation cost and material costs are charged separately according to the distance in kilometers and materials needed. (Omaraha 2013) According to a study conducted in 2005 the average plumber in Helsinki was between 40 and 50 € per hour including VAT, in the same study Vaasa's plumbing fees were investigated and they were between 30 and 40 euros including VAT. (Kuningaskuluttaja 2005) Even though the study can't provide much relevance it indicates a trend that is still constant; the capital area is more expensive. Therefore J Gibbins has to consider pricing in Porvoo according to its price level.

In the interview conducted with J Gibbins putkimies it was stated that the pricing is to remain the same since it has been carefully calculated according J Gibbins putkimies' income and costs. He established his prices according to his own investigation conducted in autumn 2014, where he contacted plumbing companies in the Porvoo area for price quotations. He found that the average price of a plumber in Porvoo is around 43 € per hour including VAT. Regardless it can be stated that the pricing is adequate as it is lower than the capital area at 36 € + VAT. But since J Gibbins is aiming to network with other companies he does not charge them VAT, which is according to the Finnish taxation, so the starting price point for partnering companies is 36 €. (Vero 2012) Furthermore when networking it is easier to offer partners discounts when the starting point for the price is not as low at the lowest possible level. (Gibbins, interview 2 February 2015)

Porvoo as the place is very lucrative, since, as mentioned, it has lots of old buildings, new areas being built and is at the center of many new developments. (Porvoo 2015) As the networking strategy from previous chapter states Porvoo has a variety of potential businesses to network and build a relationship as well as a set of trade unions to join. Furthermore J Gibbins putkimies' van is considered in the place category. As the van doesn't have any print on it J Gibbins should consider print advertisement in order to indicate that it is his van, where he operates from. This could also bring potential new customers.

When considering the promotion side of the marketing mix J Gibbins' current marketing cannot offer much. He has built his reputation in Helsinki with good customer service skills, motivation and strong work ethic. When it comes to establishing partnerships building a good reputation is vital since networks are based on willingness to cooperate together. Plumbers can have bad reputation when it comes to dealing with customers, being trustworthy and completing their work accordingly (Talouselämä 2012). It is a good start for a SME like J Gibbins putkimies to build up his name with customer centric thinking.

When planning the communication side and building the brand for J Gibbins putkimies it is vital to promote responsibility. According to a recent study, promoting responsibility in the construction industries marketing campaigns is more significant than in other industries. The study indicates that 80% of bosses in the construction industry has adopted being responsible as part of their brand. (Epressii 2014)

### 3.6 SWOT - analysis

With the help of a SWOT analysis the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats can be analyzed when it comes to J Gibbins putkimies marketing plan for networking. The SWOT is based on the authors' vision and views and the following graph will display the summary.

<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Price: lower than average</li> <li>- Large skill set: Experience in both Finland and England in plumbing</li> <li>- Over 10 years of experience</li> <li>- Own transportation and tools</li> <li>- Understanding the importance of good customer service</li> </ul>	<b>Weakness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unable to communicate in Finnish</li> <li>- Lack of connections in Porvoo, both personal and professional</li> <li>- Restricted capital</li> <li>- Pricing too low</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partnerships</li> <li>- Busy line of business</li> <li>- Porvoo as the working area</li> </ul>	<b>Threat</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low cost foreign workers such as Estonians offer cheap services</li> <li>- Miss treatment</li> <li>- Choosing the wrong companies</li> </ul>

Figure 5: SWOT analysis J Gibbins Putkimies

Pricing can be seen as a strength and a weakness. J Gibbins is charging lower than average in the Porvoo area since he has taken into consideration his incapability to communicate in either Finnish or Swedish which are the two main languages in the Porvoo area. His pricing provides him with a competitive edge. The lower than average price can also be a weakness since it might attract wrong kind of partners and lower his professional status. J Gibbins has a wide set of skills and a lot of experience in the plumbing industry both domestic and commercial it is important to maintain a harmony between his professional capabilities and price. Other important weakness' is his lack of connections both personal and professional. Since J Gibbins putkimies is new to the area he has not been able to establish himself as part of the community.

A big threat in the construction field is foreign workers in particular Estonians who are prepared to work for cheap prices. Estonians do not have a minimum wage in their country; they are unaware of Finland's rules and regulations when it comes to employment. This can conclude in them working for as little as two euros per hour, even though an average builders wage in Finland is around 15 euros. (Helsingin uutiset 2012)

As mentioned before, Porvoo is an old town and many properties are requiring renovations and maintenance and the area is has many new developments which gives J Gibbins an opportunity of lots of work.

### 3.7 Choosing marketing means

When choosing the correct marketing means for J Gibbins putkimies it is vital to consider all the necessary attributes that affect the marketing communication plan. The company is a SME run by one person with hardly any awareness and limited capital. The company is currently operating in Helsinki but is looking to move its business to Porvoo. J Gibbins putkimies has a wide set of tools and transportation and believes in customer centric thinking promoting good customer service and work ethic. The service includes all plumbing works.

The market area is Porvoo which offers opportunities for J Gibbins with its new developments, old buildings, energy and environmental technology companies and it being the commercial center in Itä-Uusimaa district.

The target group is other construction/plumbing companies which operate in the Porvoo area or surroundings. The marketing communications focus on establishing partnerships and cooperation's and gain a solid network of connections. Competitors are disregarded since the competitors are viewed as potential partners rather than a threat.

The target group can be reached by B2B communication methods; these including personal selling and direct marketing tools. Furthermore attributes from public relations and advertising should be applied. Direct marketing means such as direct mail, e-mail and telemarketing should be utilized followed by face-to-face communication. It is important to get the J Gibbins putkimies name and reputation around the construction community in Porvoo. Participating in local professional fares is important and becoming a member in trade unions or interest groups is important. Furthermore becoming an active member of the community can spur new associates.

The aim is to network in the Porvoo area and surroundings and find long lasting partners or cooperators that can provide J Gibbins putkimies with adequate amount of work. The marketing should commence immediately starting with the more cost-effective and inexpensive method since budget is limited. The marketing should be monitored after a communication tool is utilized, in order to ensure that the marketing communication is efficient and it should be altered accordingly when necessary.

The budget is set to a very minimum; therefore it is important to ensure that the chosen communication tools are able to bring the necessary return on the investment. Monitoring and frequent assessment will aid in eliminating inadequate marketing tools. There isn't a set marketing budget. The money spent on marketing will fluctuate monthly according to other prof-

its and costs. Some months marketing communications might be disregarded whereas on prosperous months it will be highlighted.

### 3.8 Intermedia decisions

With the company attributes above, secondary data, J Gibbins interview and desk study, a conclusion about the potential marketing means can be made.

The most cost effective marketing means for networking is direct marketing methods; tele-marketing, email and mail. Furthermore advertisement should be posted in the local newspaper, business cards should be printed, van should be sign written and social and professional groups should be pursued and participated in.

### 3.9 Intramedia decisions

Based on intermedia decisions three main marketing means are selected for the marketing communication; direct marketing, print advertisement and participating in interest groups.

#### 3.9.1 Direct marketing

The companies established as potential partners in the networking strategy were Consti Group, Uudenmaan LVI asennus, Putkityö P. Lampi and LVI Center Auhtola. As said in personal selling it is important to tailor the marketing communication to meet the customer's needs. In this case since all the companies are from the same field of expertise and the seller J Gibbins putkimies has limited resources, will the starting point for the marketing communication be the same. Once the building of the relationship commences will the communication be adjusted to meet the needs of the partners.

J Gibbins should start by sending an email to the targeted companies with his updated CV, letter of reference, covering letter and a short introductory message. If after a week there is no response J Gibbins should call the companies for a follow up on the email which after he should try and set up a meeting and try and establish a relationship. All the companies in question have contact details on their website. Consti groups HR manager Sanna Rantsi and the capital areas work manager Harry Mäkinen should be targeted. (Consti group 2015) With Uudenmaan LVI-asennus their contact person Mika Vanhanen should be contacted. (Täyden palvelun putkiliike). Pasi Lampi from Putkityö P. Lampi should be contacted (Putkityö P. Lampi Oy 2015) and LVI Center Auhtola can be reached out to via their web site. (LVI Center Auhtola 2015)

Furthermore J Gibbins should contact other local construction companies on more general level in the Porvoo area. Google search engine lists several plumbers and plumbing companies in the Porvoo area with contact details. He should design a short letter introducing him and his company. The letter should be of one page and fairly short with basic details such name, picture, work experience, skill set, offering and contact details. The copy of the letter should be either emailed or mailed to companies. In addition companies could be contacted via telephone with a more casual sales speech.

The cost for the direct marketing campaign is fairly inexpensive. Since J Gibbins is rather looking to spread his name and find new contacts to network with than sell something the marketing communication does not need to be very innovative rather casual and professional. J Gibbins can design, write and print at his home office his short and simple letter to the companies. Calls, paper, stamps and envelopes will be of a small cost and of course his time.

### 3.9.2 Print advertisement

J Gibbins is lacking in business cards and print advertisement on his work van. According to J Gibbins his close acquaintance, who is a graphic designer is designing him a logo. (Gibbins interview 2 February) The logo can be utilized in the business card and van sign as well as contact details. Business cards can be easily ordered online for example, 250 business cards would cost 11,99 €. (Vistaprint hinnasto 2015) Van sign should involve J Gibbins putkimies' logo, name, contact details and one sentence description of the company. The advertisement would cost from Teippaukset.com starting from 120 € dependent on the wished size and additional attributes. (Presstime hinnasto 2015)

A print advertisement in the local free newspaper could be beneficial. J Gibbins is new to the area and with the assistance of the newspaper advertisement he could reach local professionals and furthermore private people who this marketing communication plan is not directly targeting. Itäväylä is a local free newspaper that is delivered every Wednesday in the Itä-Uusimaa district ( Sipoo, Pornainen, Loviisa, Askola, Pukkila, Myrskylä, Loviisa and Lapinjärvi). It reaches close to 50 000 households every week and just over 25 000 households in Porvoo. A print advertisement (2x50 mm) would cost 36 € a week when doing an order of 5 advertisements. The accumulated investment on this marketing tool would be 180€ if J Gibbins designs the advertisement himself. The advertisement should have J Gibbins' logo, name, contact details and a short description on what is sought after, indicating that he is looking to cooperate in the construction field as well as do plumbing works for private individuals. Monitoring the advantages of the print advertisement is crucial since the company's limited resources. If the advertisement doesn't offer the wanted outcome it should be stopped. (Itäväylä 2015)



### 3.9.3 Interest groups

Contacts should also be created on personal level professionally as well as socially. Becoming an active member in the community would assist in creating a network around J Gibbins. On the social side, interest and hobbies should be utilized. J Gibbins has become a member of the local golf club. Business cards could be given to the reception and to new acquaintances. J Gibbins could get involved with The Porvoo Rugby club 'Old town shamrocks'. The rugby club involves many foreigners, in particular British people, even the chairman being British. (Old town Shamrocks 2015) The setting would immediately offer a common ground to relate to and potential individuals to network with.

On the professional side J Gibbins should become a member of Porvoon yrittäjät, Suomen LVI liitto ry (SULVI) and Finnish association of HPAC Technical contractors as mentioned earlier. He should become an active member and participate in the meetings and conventions. Business cards should always be in hand. In addition SULVI has a variety of events that members can participate in such as golf. These interest groups provide J Gibbins a perfect opportunity to become an active member of the plumbing community and start networking on a personal level. As said J Gibbins' strengths are good people skills and he understands the importance of customer centric approach. Being able to network and create connection face-to-face would be an asset.

The cost of Porvoon yrittäjät is 145 € for a year and SULVI 79 €. The Finnish association of HPAC Technical contractors, (which SULVI is also member of) fees are dependent on the company turnover. Due to the small size of J Gibbins putkimies his fees would be around 250 € a year. (Expert of HPAC industry 2015) (Suomen LVI-liitto ry 2015) (Porvoon yrittäjät 2015)

### 3.9.4 Intramedia conclusion

The three key marketing tools for the J Gibbins marketing campaign are direct marketing, print advertisement and connecting with interest groups. All these three means will assist in promoting word of mouth, getting the J Gibbins putkimies name around and eventually establishing a network of connections. Word of mouth is one of the most effective marketing means especially in industries that require recommendations.

The key tools should be monitored and assessed continuously in order to ensure that the plan remains cost-effective. If a chosen marketing mean doesn't bring any interest it should be modified accordingly or even dismissed. Especially newspaper advertisement should be closely assessed because of its costly nature.

#### 4 Conclusion

The target of this study was to establish how can J Gibbins putkimies get customers in his new area of work Porvoo and what does he have to do in order to get them. Networking was chosen as the main strategy. It is an efficient and effective way for J Gibbins to grow his circle of contacts and to find potential business partners. This strategy was chosen due to limited resources.

J Gibbins is to utilize different interest groups to make him known, build loyalty and most importantly to get to know new people. Through interest groups J Gibbins can find contacts from his own industry and other industries as well. The aim is to have as much contacts as possible with the consequence that J Gibbins is able to work full time from Monday till Friday.

Suggested business partners are big and medium sized companies who could offer J Gibbins project based work lasting possibly for a longer period of time. All the possible partners work in either construction or plumbing industry and work in both public and private fields.

The focus of this study was to suggest how J Gibbins can find new customers rather than strengthening relationships with existing ones, since he is moving his operations from Helsinki to Porvoo. However after gaining a solid customer base in Porvoo and its surrounding areas, it is important for J Gibbins, that customers reuse his services due to his excellent customer service he is aiming for at all times.

A marketing plan was built around the networking strategy for J Gibbins putkimies. Customer centric approach and being responsible were highlighted in the marketing communication. The 4Ps of marketing were balanced and a SWOT was conducted in order to establish the best tools to use for J Gibbins putkimies. Secondary data was used as the main source of information for the marketing communication plan.

Direct marketing methods were found the most cost-effective communication. In addition print advertisement plan and utilizing interest groups were found efficient. It is crucial for J Gibbins to follow-up and monitor the communication plan in order to ensure that the correct tools are used properly. If a chosen marketing method is found not to bring the wanted outcome it has to be modified or even dismissed.

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